



## **Volunteer Park Conservatory Business Plan Public Meeting (3.7.12)**

### **Small Group Responses**

**Question 1. Thinking about what you value most about the conservatory—the building, the plants, or both? What Conservatory visit experiences and programs do you most value?**

#### ***Group 1***

Unique Plants  
Only public orchid display and other collections  
Great place to visit, to be in winter—all seasons  
It's free  
Value building and structure  
Victorian experience  
Part of Seattle's heritage and history and Olmsted heritage  
Water feature  
School trips  
Quiet and calm instead of hustle and bustle  
Community/all ages enjoy it  
City legacy for the natural world  
Seattle committed to this before now  
No other—unique  
Would not experience anywhere else in Seattle  
Favorite people are gardeners and volunteers  
Artistry and visual tourist destination

#### ***Group 2***

Buildings and plants go together  
Victorian glass building that sustains exotic plants  
Valuable collection. Well maintained.  
Educational  
Poetic experience

#### ***Group 3***

Building-beautiful  
Façade  
Plants very important  
Greenhouses also important  
Orchid Collection  
Accessibility is an issue (wheelchairs can use it, but with difficulty).

The building and the plants are “of a piece”  
Important for visitors to the City

***Group 4***

Seasonal displays  
Evening hours/holidays  
Special events  
A place of retreat  
Would like more art

***Group 5***

Building

Unique Landmark  
Unique on West Coast  
Healing quality with plants (haven)  
Legacy  
Olmsted heritage  
Zoo for plants/plant museum

Plants

Only place with tropical plants in Seattle/Metro  
Legacy plant collection/curated  
Old plants are part of building history  
Plants are educational resource/environment

Programs

School programs/conversation/education mission  
Docent tours  
Nursing home visits  
Art classes/Demo  
Plant sale  
Holiday lighting/wreath making

***Group 6***

All-package deal  
Building and plants  
Seasonal Display change  
Environment/escape weather  
Educational/experience behind the scenes  
Serenity/relaxing  
Unique, nothing else like it  
Beautiful to look at

***Group 7***

Plants and building part of the experience!  
Perfect size for afternoon outing  
Orchids and all flowers—seasonal  
Can’t afford Hawaii, but can get to Conservatory  
Takes to another place  
Optimal use of space/maximum experience  
Free!!!  
Back in time  
Space for personal experience

More outreach winter warmth  
World class city-cosmopolitan  
People from other places, feel at home (NGO's (non-profit government agencies, etc...))

**Question 2. What creative ideas do you have for the Conservatory to earn more revenue or cut expenses to pay for the operations of the Conservatory which costs about \$450,000 per year? How do you feel about an entrance fee?**

***Group 1***

Entry fee “for”

- With levels, ex., age
- With free days
- Only on busy days/weekend
- Combo pass with SAAM/gardens
- Season pass
- Free entry for members
- Children free

Entry fee “against”

- Want casual visits
- Would come more often
- So many fees now

Auction

Grants

Rent space

Develop unused spaces

Local nurseries have one day—all proceeds go to Conservatory

Volunteer support for restoration of building (like Habitat for Humanity)

Educational programs

Membership

***Group 2***

We should pay to get in.

Sports stadium revenue to help support

Long stay or short stay.

Maybe try an annual pass. Adult, senior, etc.

Don't make it too exclusive

Free day.

Joint pass with Asian Art Museum

“Flower Power” approach to flower/plant loving community

Profile to get tourists in—bus tours on a regular schedule

Ask for stock donations (“invest for growth” – plant and other)

Offer special tours to people wanting serious education

***Group 3***

Admission may be necessary

Membership fee possibility

Naming Rights – donor recognition  
Classes could be offered for a fee  
Acknowledgment [of donors]  
Hire a pro fundraiser – who has name recognition; ask Amazon; think big!

#### ***Group 4***

No charge for school groups  
Fee could be a deterrent  
Generally support a fee  
Collaborative Organizations (UW, Arboretum, Zoo)  
Needs marketing and branding  
100 year celebration should be bigger  
Photos through the century  
 $\$60,000 \text{ [visitors]} \times \$2 = \frac{1}{4} \text{ of the budget } [\$450,000]$   
Friends of the Conservatory raise money  
All of Volunteer Park needs a comprehensive plan  
Local Improvement District  
Educational Facilities  
Upgrade plant info  
Gift shop/restaurant/classroom space in scale.

#### ***Group 5***

Grow more plants/sell more plants  
CSA (grow vegetables and sell them)  
Sell flowers (e.g., to businesses)  
Rent Plants (rare plants)  
Tiered memberships with recognition for more \$  
Sponsorships (corporate)  
Compost program (Cedar Grove)  
Rent space for films/movies  
Utility Bill roundup  
Use solar power  
Entrance fee  
    Mandatory  
    Contribute fee directly to Conservatory  
    Group memberships/annual  
    Tour group fees

#### ***Group 6***

Entry fee? Associated costs—will need more staff , salary costs?  
Person at entry to ask for donation  
Members get in free  
Sliding fee scale—children free, etc..  
Fundraising efforts  
Outreach to other organizations  
    Neighborhood  
    Garden groups

Architecture organizations  
Sightseeing/travel  
City has cash handling in place  
Need more PR

***Group 7***

Partner with King County?  
Does it work to go from free to pay?  
Annual memberships (reasonably priced)  
\*\*Parks: Public commitment to restoration and continued support of Conservatory to draw donors  
Organized donor recognition program  
1/3 City; 1/3 earned income; 1/3 grants = funding structure  
Education programs more than LIR[?]/grants  
Better outreach  
Expand space for other activities  
Restore Conservatory and buildings behind growing house for other activities/educational classrooms  
More fundraiser events (e.g., Valentine's Day Chocolate and Wine)  
Partners with contractors to donate time, energy, materials  
Increase energy efficiency  
Garden groups-ask for assistance

**Question 3. Are there alternative uses for the Conservatory and the associated buildings that should be considered? (e.g., rental space, educational space, coffee shops, etc..)**

***Group 1***

Seek large donors  
Coffee carts outside  
Coffee shop location? (TBD)  
Adding space to provide additional uses  
Develop patio space in empty spaces for rentals  
Develop spaces for educational use (ex: food, e.g., Seattle Tilth)  
Add space for research

***Group 2***

Too small for coffee shop, or rentals. Put in back/side buildings  
Use back buildings  
Rent only to donor groups  
Too much of a treasure  
Respect paying visitors  
Renovate upper Greenhouse to make rental space and/or coffee shop  
Negotiate with vendors in part to have more food carts  
Plant sales  
Coordinate with UW Botanical, Greenhouse, community colleges, to contribute plants and labor  
Dance in Park in summer

***Group 3***

Can be good without the plants as a rental hall

Can you put up an inexpensive greenhouse in back for some of the plant to make the Conservatory more spacious  
Add a coffee shop to raise funds  
More education  
Field trip destination

#### ***Group 4***

Market through social media  
Special events shouldn't stop regular folks from visiting  
Ideas can be piloted—not an all or nothing  
Acoustic music events  
Really liked the Valentine's event  
Galvanize partnership with Parks, Parks Foundation, and Friends groups  
Coordination of music, art, flowers, dancers  
Summer arts festival  
Align with Cornish, UW Art  
Use amphitheater  
Memberships in association with admission fees  
Docents to help visitors learn about the plants  
The quality and displays are good—talk it up, don't lose it.  
Seattle should be able to support this  
Can't we find \$450,000?

#### ***Group 5***

Weddings  
Increased rental opportunities  
Include lawn in rental  
Dinners/plays/music (fee)  
Expanded hours  
SAAM remix concept  
Charge extra for alcohol events  
Birthday parties  
Charge for private tours  
Team building events

#### ***Group 6***

Research space—rental income  
Collaborate with Horticulture and UW  
After hours rental-larger capacity  
Educational programs  
Commercial filming  
Artists rent after hours  
Field trips for schools  
Docent tours  
SAAM space for larger groups/classes/lectures  
Water tower-coffee shop

#### ***Group 7***

Temporary uses and supporting uses

More weddings and events at Conservatory (augment with tents) and ask City Council to charge more (currently only \$300)

Coffee shop/cart in park

Strengthen links between Conservatory and SAAM with programs and physical things such as:

- Horticulture

- Lecture space, projectors, PA system

- Lease/lend/borrow space between the two

- Collaborate on topics

**Question 4. How do you feel about the Conservatory being used more often for special events like ceremonies, weddings, education programs, and summer day camps? (e.g., costs, traffic, parking, exclusive use versus increased revenue, etc.)**

***Group 1***

More weddings

More events

Use tents outside and have VPC open for group/weddings

\*Build permanent pergola or trellis structure for group/weddings on the west side the bromeliad house

\Day camps—restore the old east side of glass house in potting shed

Yoga, wine party

Using photovoltaics/solar and other efficiencies to save utility costs

***Group 2***

Limit events to after hours

“New ideas” for plant displays

Economic Plants

***Group 3***

Have exclusive hours and open hours

Not an issue [to have special events]

Have a B & B made out of the old caretaker’s house

***Group 4 (no specific response)***

***Group 5***

We like the idea.

***Group 6***

Small scale education groups

Size limited

Lose serenity with more activities

Improve Parks website information on rentals

Improve Parks’ internal collaboration (i.e., lifelong learning, etc.)

Expand cottage programming (conferences, etc.)

Partner with Lakeview Cemetery

Parks must retain control!

Charge for parking with funds going directly to the Conservatory

***Group 7***

Important to allow more special events

Charge more

Double-edged sword-special events (limit public use)  
School groups  
Scheduling priorities to minimize disruption—after hours and notify public in advance of closures  
Add parking  
Friends of the Conservatory-sponsored events—where does the money go?

**Question 5. Should the City partner with a non-profit or private entity to maintain the Conservatory operations, programs, and services? What parameters should be considered if a partnership is considered?**

***Group 1(no specific response)***

***Group 2***

Partner with corporations such as Starbucks, Amazon.com  
Partner with Asian Art Museum  
Themed exhibits and displays  
Chihuly Museum as partner  
Glass display at Conservatory  
“Glass within a glass house”  
“Safeco” Conservatory?  
No signs! Subtle!  
Do if partnering helps the mission  
Where is City Council? There were there when sports stadium was brought up!  
Create “  
Conservatory “Conservancy”  
Seattle Parks Foundation to help set up partnership

***Group 3***

Expanded Friends of the Conservatory  
Annual membership  
Like the idea of a strong partner  
What does it mean to have a partner?

***Group 4 (no specific response)***

***Group 5***

Yes (others) = depends  
Solar company participation  
General contractors  
Concerns about efficiency of partnerships  
Concerns about corporate commitment  
Authority concerns  
Needs to remain a public place and honor the public mission  
Sad to see it lose its public character  
Look for grants  
Concerns around loss of clear management control  
Rich donors  
KCTS Partnership  
Tie into Asian Art Museum visitors, co-entrance fee?’ exhibit links  
Annual entry fees/per visit



Turnstile gizmo  
 Local art lighting firm: 3Form Light Art will design custom fixtures-botanic series to tie into fundraising  
 Café with wifi-freestanding building (ref: Swanson's, Frye Museum, coordinate with SAAM)  
 Social media tie in  
 Mention in tourist info—hotels, tour buses, cruises—link in  
 Tweak hours to fit tour groups  
 Musical collection  
 Tie into Chihuly Museum, glass art, etc.  
 Expand the Conservatory  
 Increase education  
 Create an endowment for maintenance –from corporate sponsor or individual  
 Partner more with horticulture schools-interns  
 Venue for small music groups  
 One time art auction-pieces created to Conservatory  
 Improve physical connection between SAAM and Conservatory with walkway, plants that really physically/visually connects  
 Maybe if it were more known-on buses, etc.  
 Involve public school kids more  
 Commemorative poster 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary—yearly posters?  
 Photo exhibits  
 Why not under the umbrella of Parks Foundation?\Why not a yearly park fee card to include Conservatory and other fee-related events/places  
 Don't like pay fee; parents with kids need to be able to come  
 Both-fee and donation box  
 Zoo is a good example  
 Link with other commercial-computer links to Conservatory; corporate sponsors  
 Link internationally, orchid societies, other conservatories  
 Grants  
 Love the collection—it has never looked better  
 Build relationship with NW Horticulture activities  
 Gees, but with free days  
 Broader scale product links or sponsorships  
 Monthly name “plate” support sponsorship  
 Christmas event wonderful-lights great!  
 Expand to any holiday  
 Combo admission tickets for tourists (combined with other site)  
 Geothermal heat-federal government grants  
 Focus on beauty of exterior structure  
 Ticket includes return visits on “X” days  
 Link tickets/memberships to other conservatories  
 Link Art/Zoo memberships too

### ***Group 6***

No partnership—business as usual  
 Metro Park District  
 NPO-fundraising  
 Would ARC (Associated Recreation Council) be better than FOC (Friends of the Conservatory)?  
 Minority youth

### ***Group 7***

Look at Zoo—is/how is it working out? What is it accomplishing?

Preference is not for a profit. It is important to have a non-profit if it is turned over.

Adopt a peacock window! Pays for maintenance.

Bricks—buy a brick

Seasonal house: opening, plants in containers, good place for appreciation and recreation

On-line sales to expand the gift shop

City should figure out to find the Conservatory: legacy, treasured and valued, spoken of public

Someone who speaks for the Conservatory—Chihuly? David?